



CALTRANS COMMUTER ALERT

06-327

Date: Thursday, September 7, 2006
District: 8- INLAND EMPIRE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON I-40

Ludlow to Needles – The Department of Transportation, Caltrans, announces that it will begin the first of two construction projects to replace damaged bridges within a 17-mile stretch of Interstate 40 from east of Kelbaker Road to west of Essex Road. The work to replace the eastbound bridges will begin Friday, September 8, 2006 and will be conducted Monday through Saturday during daytime hours.

To expedite completion and ensure the safety of workers and motorists, traffic will be switched to the west bound lanes of Interstate 40 on Thursday, September 07, 2006 at two different locations. The first traffic switch will take place at Marble Wash Bridge and will continue for approximately one-half mile. The second switch will begin approximately 9 miles further at Fortress Wash Bridge and continue for approximately 7 miles to Mustang Wash Bridge. One lane in each direction will be available to motorists on the west bound side of Interstate 40 during this traffic switch.

Motorists are advised that speeds will be reduced to **45 mph** through the construction zone to allow for the safe negotiation of the traffic switch. The California Highway Patrol will be on site to enforce the reduced speed limits and provide additional law enforcement duties as needed.

The damaged bridges were discovered earlier this year during Caltrans' bi-annual bridge inspection. An emergency order was issued to shore and stabilize the six affected bridges. Traffic was reduced to one lane in each direction to accommodate the stabilization process.

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Caltrans understands that Interstate 40 is a vital link between California and the Arizona/Nevada border. In an effort to provide the greatest level of service and improvement to the public, Caltrans will be utilizing pre-cast girders. The use of these materials will dramatically reduce the construction time needed to replace the damaged bridges, allowing Caltrans the ability to fully open the highway to motorists sooner.

To avoid delays, Caltrans advises travelers to use alternate routes. Trucks are advised to avoid using the old route 66 due to weight restrictions. Detour routes to Arizona/Nevada:

- ?? I-10 east to US-95 north to I-40 *
- ?? I-10 east to SR-62 east to US-95 north to I-40
- ?? I-10 east to SR-177 north to SR-62 east to US-95 north to I-40 *
- ?? I-15 north to Nevada

* US 95 between Blythe and Vidal Junction is subject to escorts until Monday, September 11, 2006 due to storm damage repairs.

Motorists choosing to travel on the I-40 should allow extra time for the trip. Be prepared to travel across the desert. Bring water, medications, snacks, and make sure your car is in good running condition. Please drive cautiously and merge early. For more information regarding this or other Caltrans' projects, visit our website at www.caltrans8.info or call 866-383-4631.

Please remember to **SLOW FOR THE CONE ZONE.**

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